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*Poems - P*  
**Sonnets**

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*Other Verses*

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*By*

NELSON PROWER

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## P R E F A C E

SOME of the sonnets and all the other verses were suggested by my little friends at St. Matthew's Mission, at which I have the honour to be a Lay Reader. If anyone thinks these verses show signs of second childhood in the writer, he is of course entitled to his opinion. The other sonnets are included because friends whose opinions I valued have said that "as you are bringing out some verses" they ought to be included. I have put in the sonnet about Apollo, as I think it shows that a Greek god, differing little from a man except in immortality, would find immortality in this world a doubtful boon. Only one sonnet and one other piece have been printed before.

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## ST. GEORGE'S DAY

The spring is with us, and 'tis now the day  
On which we celebrate our Patron Saint,  
Whose Cross upon our banner meets the ray  
Of sunshine from above. Need we with faint  
Heart and with timid souls the future face,  
Though clouds confront us? No! Our glorious land  
Is destined to advance in strength; our race  
For Right and Freedom will for ever stand.

'Twas on this day Shakespeare and Woodsworth died;  
Was this by chance? At least, I think, we may  
Remember it; and, while from every side  
We hear of troubles, let us never say  
A cowardly word: the future let us dare  
To face with hope, with courage,—and with prayer.

## WHITSUNDAY

This day is called "The Birthday of the Church,"  
When the disciples all with one accord  
From that one place began their ceaseless search  
For human souls, to bring them to the Lord.  
The search will never end until, once more,  
With all His holy angels we shall see  
Him come again; and then from shore to shore  
All people, sheep and goats shall gathered be.

Who are the sheep and who the goats? Ah, much  
Is hidden, for we must not judge each other;  
But those on His right hand we know were such  
As helped a friend in need, as though a brother,  
And bore his burdens. Thus we know that love  
Will be our passport to the realms above.



## THE KING'S SILVER JUBILEE

Long has the King been given o'er us to reign  
In health and wealth, his foreign enemies  
Vanquished and overcome. Without a stain  
Has always been that noble life of his  
Which we are doing what we can today  
To honour. Justly may we honour one  
Like our King George, and gladly tribute pay  
To him, and think of all that he has done.

All he has done was done for England's sake;  
No thought of self disturbed his stedfast course  
Of duteous service to us; this should make  
Us all revere him, and with all our force  
Truly support, and help with all our power,  
Him whom we honour in this festal hour.

## MOTHERS' SUNDAY

Most of our dear young people who, each year,  
Come to the Mission on this happy day  
Can go back home and see their kind and dear  
Mothers, and listen to them as they say,  
"Did you enjoy the Service?" and reply,  
"Yes, Mother; what we heard was all about  
Mothers and what they do for us, and I  
Enjoyed it, and was sorry to come out."

A few, when they come out from their dear Church,  
Cannot go home to Mother; she is dead.  
But, though they sorrow, need they vainly search  
For comfort? No; for they, indeed, instead  
Of seeing her, can think of her, in love,  
As waiting for them in her home above.

## CHRISTMAS DAY

This is the Children's Day; today they see  
The bright red holly berries, and in joy  
Gather around the festal hearth; and we  
Old people can rejoice with girl and boy;  
For why should age make people sad or glum  
When they can play with children, and again  
Be as the children are? They let us come  
To play; their play gives pleasure, never pain.

And if our Christmases are nearly o'er,  
And if we feel each one may be our last,  
Why, this should only make us feel the more  
Happy to know our lot may still be cast  
Among the young, whose Christmas joys are new,  
And who will share them all in love with you.

## SCHOOL DAYS

You are not sent far off to school, you boys  
And girls, as I was; you each day return  
To see again home faces; and home joys  
Are yours each evening. See, then, that you earn  
Home happiness by showing one another  
All courtesy, and, keeping tempers cool,  
Let brother sister love and sister brother,  
Whether at home or whether at your school.

David of old said, "I will praise the Lord  
With the best member that I have." Ah, yes,  
When we speak nicely and with kindly word  
'Tis best of all the members we possess;  
So let it always speak in kindly tone;  
'Twill be remembered when long years have gone.

## THE OPENING OF SPRING

April, the month of "opening"—called so  
By those who named the month in ancient Rome—  
Is with us now. We to our gardens go  
To watch the opening flowers around our home.  
Bud after bud expands before our eyes,  
Till all the little garden, blooming bright,  
Seems to be laughing with us, in surprise,  
At its own beauty. 'Tis a lovely sight.

This earthly beauty, thus each year renewed,  
May surely kindle hope within ourselves  
That we, aye we, may also be endued  
With hope that, as within the earth one delves  
To render it more fruitful, so may we,  
Looking within our hearts, more happy be.

## "HOW COULD YOU LEAVE OLD ENGLAND?"

The other day an old friend said to me,  
"How could you leave Old England?" Knowing well  
I loved her, he had thought I could not be  
Happy away from her. But I could tell  
My friend just how it was, for here I found  
Kind loving friends; and every Sunday hear  
The same majestic words, whose sacred sound  
Ne'er palls upon a reverent listener's ear.

"How could you leave her?" I have never left  
Old England, she is here; her sons, her soul,  
Her blood, her speech. I have not been bereft  
Of aught that's hers, though seas between us roll.  
We are not exiles, nor condemned to roam  
On foreign strand.—No, here we are at home.



## DUTY

Duty, "that which is due"; to whom? and why?  
Yet is there any need for us to ask  
This question? For we all know, you and I,  
How truly its imperious call can task  
All that is best in us to answer it;  
And how we gird ourselves to rise and do  
The hard things that we know are right and fit,  
And must, though great the cost, be carried through.

"England expects that every man will do  
His duty." Yes, these words are in our hearts;  
We learnt them in our childhood; and to you,  
To me, to all, help us to play our parts;  
For in this world in which we have to live  
Our best to one another we should give.

## "NON ANGLI SED ANGELI"

'Tis said that long ago the Pope of Rome,  
Perceiving 'mid the dark Italian throng  
Two fair-haired boys, from distant Northern home  
Torn to be sold, said, as he passed along,  
"So fair are these young Angle lads, so bright  
Their eyes, so fair their hair with threads of gold,  
That they would be as angels in my sight  
If our Lord Christ would take them to His Fold."

A thousand years have gone; the English boys  
Are just as fair, their skins are just as white,  
Their hair as golden; but the Pontiff's dream  
Is realised; to them are given the joys  
Of Christian brotherhood, to fight the fight  
For Christ, and trust in Him in death's dark stream.

## “LET YOUR LIGHT”

There is a fortress on the river Rhine  
Called “The bright stone of honour.” As a gem  
Is brought up from the darkness of a mine,  
Is seen of men and is admired of them,  
So should a deed by honour prompted glow  
As the bright stone; nor need it ever shun  
The gaze of men, but let it sparkle so  
That all may see it shining in the sun.

Yes, noble deeds should meet our mortal eye,  
Not for the glory of the doer; nay,  
But when men see them they should glorify  
The heavenly Father, as the Scriptures say  
They should; thus honour’s stone that gleams so bright  
Adds to its earthly gleam a heavenly light.

## I HAVE BEEN YOUNG AND AM NOW OLD; BUT NEVER YET SAW THE RIGHTEOUS FORSAKEN

The royal poet tells us here that he  
Neither in youth nor when he had grown old  
Had ever known a righteous man to be  
Forsaken. And should we be overbold  
In trusting that what he had never seen  
None other e’er would see? For David so  
Seems to suggest; yes, this his words must mean;  
This must he wish that all the world should know.

Dare we assert that this is true today?  
That good men never live in poverty?  
Aye, they may live in poverty; but they  
Know well that He Who for their souls did die  
Is standing by them; He, their steadfast friend,  
Will give them care and comfort to the end.

## YOUTH AND AGE

Which is the happier state, old age or youth?  
Any young man would laugh, I think, to hear  
The question asked, and yet there is in truth  
Some doubt. If Hope has gone, well, so has Fear;  
Success and failure equally have gone,  
And we can see how little each is worth;  
For happiness, we know as time goes on,  
Depends not on the riches of this earth.

Riches and worldly office cannot make  
The happiness that only from the heart  
Can come to us. The old may comfort take,  
If they can manage so to play their part  
That they may win the love of those around,  
For in that love alone true joy is found.

## TO R. L., THE SWEET SINGER

You, my dear friend, can make my heart rejoice,  
In listening to you when in Church you sing,  
Because you sing not only with your voice  
But with your soul, for you can always bring  
Your heart into your voice; and well I know  
Your disposition kind and sweet, for you  
Feel every word you sing; your heart doth flow  
With kindness, and your voice doth thus ring true.

I heard you first, dear R., when, as a child  
With treble voice you sang, and promise gave  
Of blossom from the bud, e'en as the wild  
Buds do expand; to you 'twas given to save  
Your voice and throat from sickness, to the joy  
Of those who hear the man, and heard the boy.

## "HERE AM I"

The boy who served the temple lay in bed  
Sleeping the sleep that is the sweet reward  
Of those whose lives are good. His little head  
Lay on the pillow. Was it of his Lord  
He dreamed? Perhaps; and as he sleeping lay,  
He heard a voice that called his name. He woke,  
It called again; he called up strength to say,  
"Lord, here am I," knowing Who 'twas that spoke.

How many of us now would love to hear  
That Voice, or would we dread it? Yet the call  
Will come,—to those who trust, to those who fear,  
Alike,—'tis coming some day to us all;  
So may we live that when we come to die  
We answer may with trust, "Lord, here am I."

## DAVID AND JONATHAN

"Father and son are dead; they were in life  
Lovely and pleasant; aye, and now in death  
Are not divided. All their earthly strife  
Is over, never more will they draw breath.  
He whom I loved on earth—and with a love  
Surpassing other love—is lying prone  
In death; oh, is there life for us above,  
Or is he gone, and am I left alone?"

Thus David felt, uncertain if the dead  
Would rise again, or if the grave would end  
Existence. We, thank God, have no such dread;  
Yes, we can look on death as on a friend,  
For when we've drawn on earth our final breath  
We still can meet our loved ones after death.

## HOME

"Members one of another," said St. Paul,  
In words that none of us should e'er forget;  
These solemn words are true indeed of all,  
Throughout this wide, wide world of ours; and yet  
They have a special truth for those who live  
As members of a family, for they  
Have special chances mutual love to give,  
All helping one another every day.

Yes, when the evening comes and Dad returns  
From work, oh let us welcome him with joy;  
And while the kettle sings, and brightly burns  
The fire, may Dad and Mother, girl and boy,  
Unite to give each other happiness,  
And they will know that God their home will bless.

## TENNYSON'S "IN MEMORIAM"

Has any poet, in any tongue, e'er written  
An elegy more beautiful than this?  
Our sweetest poet with fearful grief was smitten  
When death seized him with whom he'd known such bliss.  
Such happiness the two had known as friend  
And friend that when in time young Arthur died,  
Alfred may have desired to meet his end  
With him, and lie dead with him, side by side.

But Tennyson has written something more;  
"Crossing the Bar," the poem of his old age,  
Shows us he knew that, on the farther shore,  
He'd meet his Arthur, when the earthly stage  
Of life would be no more, and his true friend  
Will be with him where love will have no end.



## THE FAREWELL OF SOCRATES TO PHÆDO

"He stroked my hair," said Phædo in his story,  
    "Pressing with his loved hand a drooping tress  
Upon my neck. Aye, 'twas a crowning glory  
    For me on his last day on earth! Ah, yes,  
He often stroked my hair, and who can say  
    If in the world to which his soul has flown  
He still may see me, though so far away,  
    E'en in that world he'll know me for his own."

Plato, who heard him tell his story thus  
    Has thought it right that all the world should read  
Of such devotion; and to all of us  
    The story teaches something we should need:  
That is that, after this poor life, friend's love  
Is what will follow us to realms above.

## THE GRIEF OF APOLLO FOR THE DEATH OF HYACINTH

"The quoit has struck him on the temple! Oh,  
    That this should be! Can it indeed be true  
That my sweet boy is dead and gone? Aye, so  
    It is; and naught that I, a god, can do  
Will bring him back again, to cheer my heart  
    With his sweet ways and loving laughing eyes;  
My godhood cannot help me, for' no art  
    Can catch the human soul as off it flies.

"The human soul! Ah yes; were I a man  
    I'd know that all my griefs would have an end;  
But I'm immortal, and I never can  
    Look for oblivion; naught can ever mend  
My broken heart, for vainly I would crave  
    That which a man can look for, in the grave."

\* \* \*

Hyacinth was an adopted son of Apollo, and the god, while teaching him to play quoits, accidentally killed him with a quoit that the wind blew out of its course.

# THE OLD FEET AND THE LITTLE FEET

More than two thousand years ago  
'Twas said in Grecian tongue,  
By ancient heathen sage, that "He  
Whom the gods love dies young."

And we to whom it has been given  
Long time on earth to spend  
Are tempted oft to envy those  
Who early met their end.

Yet, should it be the will of God  
That we should tarry here,  
Life need not be a wilderness,  
Nor need the world be drear.

Children there are to love and tend  
And guide upon their way,  
With loving looks and loving words  
To cheer their opening day.

And they, whose angels always see  
In Heaven the Father's face,  
May sometimes comfort draw from those  
Whose feet have run the race.

The old feet and the toddling feet  
Together may be drawn,  
Together—till "Goodbye" is said  
And the old feet meet the Dawn.

## GOOD SPIRITS

Think pleasant thoughts as soon as you  
At morn get out of bed;  
Let some amusing thing, some joke,  
Be running in your head.

First thoughts give colour to the day,  
They make a pleasant start;  
They bring a kind of cheerfulness  
To warm the human heart.

Goodness need never make us feel  
Gloomy or glum or sad,  
For the religion of Our Lord  
Is meant to make us glad.

And the more glad we are ourselves  
The more we can make others  
Glad also, both our parents and  
Our sisters and our brothers.

The words "Lift up your hearts" you'll find  
Writ in your Book of Prayer,  
And you can feel full confidence  
In all that's written there.

## CHURCH

You love to hear the organ play,  
And each can join in heart  
And voice, and feel that in the things  
Of Church you bear a part.

"The things of Church?" Yes, what are they?  
Well, one is singing praise  
To Him Who made us, for to Him  
We should our voices raise.

And then we hear His holy Words,  
And how Our Lord did live  
On earth, and how upon the Cross  
For us His life did give.

And then we ask for all we need  
For soul and body too,  
For all we need to make us fit  
For what we have to do.

Thus we can take our part in Church,  
For none are strangers where  
As Christians we together come  
To join in praise and prayer.

## FORGIVE ANGRY WORDS

Did someone say some angry words  
To you this morn at school?  
Was someone saying "Stupid ass,"  
Or shouting "Silly fool"?

Well, if a man calls me an ass  
It does not make me one;  
What harm, then, has he done to me  
When all is said and done?

'Tis what I know myself to be  
That sometimes gives me pain,  
Not what I'm called by other folk  
Whose tongues they cannot rein.

If you are sure that what they say  
About you isn't true,  
Then what such naughty people say  
Should matter naught to you!

So rein your own tongue, rendering good  
For evil, and forgive;  
And you will be the happier  
As long as e'er you live.

## THE ORGAN IN CHURCH

We like to hear the organ play  
The chants and hymns we love;  
The music seems to raise our hearts  
And thoughts to things above.

We like to hear the old, old tunes,  
Knowing that all around  
In other churches the same hymns,  
The same dear tunes are found.

Yes, words and tune together seem  
Into one thing to grow,  
And more and more, as time goes on,  
We love to find them so.

You'll find, my dear young friends, each year  
These hymns will surely steal  
Into your hearts, and more and more  
Their beauties you will feel.

Beauty of spirit never fades,  
These hymns will never pall;  
We love them, and, in after life,  
They'll comfort each and all.



## KINDNESS BOUNCES BACK

You all know well that if you take  
    An india-rubber ball,  
And then, for fun, to pass the time,  
    You throw it at the wall,

It bounces back to you again.  
    Now, this will happen too,  
When kindness done to someone else  
    Comes bouncing back to you.

All happiness that you confer  
    On other girls and boys  
Brings back, dear friends, to you yourselves  
    The best of earthly joys.

For kindness, given and received,  
    Backwards and forwards flows;  
And one will find this more and more  
    As on through life one goes.

So kindness show whene'er you can  
    To those with whom you live,  
And back again you will receive  
    All that you ever give.

## TO A CHILD LEARNING THE VIOLIN

Dear little friend, I envy you,  
    I wish that I could play  
The violin, as I heard you  
    Play it the other day.

To play correctly is quite right,  
But more than that, dear boy,  
Is wanted, or the violin  
Is little but a toy.

Your soul and feelings must be put  
Into those little strings,  
For 'tis unto the hearer's heart  
That real music sings.

And you have got a loving heart,  
And so I know that you  
Will make them sing, and friends will hear  
Your music ringing true.

And thus your talent you will not  
Within a napkin hide,  
And joy will in your fellow's heart  
And your own, too, abide.

## PET ANIMALS

I daresay in your home I'll see,  
Asleep upon a mat  
Before the stove, a little dog  
Or else a pussy cat.

I'm sure you will be kind to them,  
And pet and love them too,  
And then you may be sure they will  
In turn feel love for you.

Doggies are always grateful, and  
I am quite sure you'll find  
They will repay you with their love  
If you are good and kind.

And pussies, too, appreciate  
The hand that strokes and pats;  
Kindness is never wasted that  
You show to dogs and cats.

God made them, and He cannot wish  
That you should treat them ill;  
So love them, and I pledge my word  
Your cup with love they'll fill.

## SPRING

'Tis sweet when winter cold is o'er  
To see the buds again,  
And mark the green leaves coming out  
'Neath mingled sun and rain.

How lovely now the lilacs look,  
And Oh! the bright red May!  
Why, some new beauty seems to burst  
Upon us every day!

And nice it is to run about  
Without the ice and snow;  
No rubbers now to hamper us  
As round the fields we go!

And we should let the charm of spring  
Rise up within us too,  
So let new hopes and new resolves  
Now blossom forth in you.

New hopes, new aspirations too,  
These bright fine days should bring,  
And happiness should blossom forth  
In the gay days of spring.

## SUMMER

No lessons now to tire our brains,  
So never mind the heat!  
We now can to the bay go down  
Where many friends we'll meet.

And if we don't go far away,  
But play around our home,  
We have no lesson books to con,  
Our thoughts are free to roam!

Yes, two whole months of holiday,  
And we'll enjoy the rest,  
Keep out of doors and run and play;  
The fine fresh air is best!

Now holidays enable us  
New vigour to attain,  
So that we bye and bye can work  
At lesson books again.

But now we need not think of that,  
And we'll enjoy our play,  
Our happiness, I'm sure, is quite  
"Sufficient for the day."

## AUTUMN

The maples now are turning red,  
And almost every hue  
Is found within the woods around  
In splendour spread for you.

And the mosquitoes now are gone  
That used to tease you so,  
And you will never now be stung  
As through the woods you go.

And you can walk and run about  
Without the burning heat  
Making you weary as you run;  
Running is now a treat!

But while the leaves are falling off  
You will be growing still,  
And air and food and exercise  
With strength your frame will fill.

You do not fall as falls the leaf,  
Nor, like mosquitoes, die,  
So you can see the leaves fall off  
Without regret or sigh.

## WINTER

It is not Christmas Day alone  
That cheers you through the cold  
Of Winter—other days there are  
To cheer both young and old.

We are more near together then  
Than when away we rove  
In the light evenings; now we sit  
Around the lighted stove.

Birds in their nests agree,—at least  
A poet says they do,—  
But you are more than sparrows, dears,  
Of much more value you.



You should agree together, then,  
For Winter is the test  
Of how we human birds agree  
Within our human nest.

Let words and looks be good and kind  
As round the fire we play,  
And make each evening just as bright  
As if 'twere Christmas Day.

## TO BERNARD A. IN HOSPITAL

Dear little Bernard, as in bed  
So patiently you lie,  
I know that all your thoughts are sweet  
As the dull hours pass by.

For there's another little boy  
In the same room with you,  
And well I know how much you'll love  
To cheer your neighbour too.

So he, when he is home again,  
Will not forget how he  
Was cheered by your kind words, dear child,  
And he will grateful be.

And you to him, for he gave you  
The chance to show that love  
Wins love, and, given and received,  
Gains blessing from above.

And if perchance, dear, you and he  
Should some day meet again,  
You then may share some fun together  
As you did once your pain.

## TO THREE FRIENDS IN ENGLAND

No longer children, yes, I know,  
Quite grown up, that is true;  
And yet to me you always seem  
As I remember you!

I probably shall never see  
Your faces any more;  
Forgive me if I think of you  
As what you were of yore.

But changes are in form alone  
And need not touch the heart;  
The heart is true through every change,  
We shall not drift apart.

Nor have we, for your letters, dears,  
Do very clearly show  
That you remember the old friend  
Who always loved you so.

Human affection, truly felt,  
Can never, never fail,  
But will indeed, as well I know,  
O'er time and space prevail.

## BIRTHDAYS

Happy returns, my little friend,  
Happy and many too;  
And very heartily I wish  
The best of gifts to you.

The best of gifts in strength and health,  
In body and in mind,  
And happiness of every sort  
Among your friends so kind.

And you, dear child, be kind to them,  
For, when you are so, they  
Are happy, and will love to see  
Your happiness this day.

Your happiness and theirs, you see,  
Are bound with links of steel  
Together, and when you are good  
They too will happy feel.

Mother and Dad, and brothers too,  
And sisters, big and small,  
Where sweetness and kind hearts are found  
There will be bliss for all.

## HOLIDAYS

Two months without the daily walk  
To school, two months for play;  
How nice it is to be at home  
With lots of fun all day.

And if the day time is too hot  
There is the evening cool,  
And lots of days and evenings too  
Ere you go back to school.

And there's the bathing at the beach,  
For many of you can swim,  
And that will do your muscles good  
And freshen up each limb.

But don't forget that "holidays"  
Means "holy days," and you  
Will see that you do not do aught  
That children shouldn't do.

Thus holidays and holy days  
Will really be the same,  
And thus you really will enjoy  
Your every sport and game.

## CHRISTENING

Many of those who home return  
After the Sunday School,  
Whenever there's a baptism  
Appear to break their rule.

They stay to see the little child  
Brought on its mother's arm,  
Wrapped up so carefully to shield  
Its little frame from harm.

And when the priest the infant takes,  
They stand upon tiptoe,  
While he the cleansing water pours;  
It interests them so!

Now let us trust that they may think  
Of how they once were brought  
To feel the same reviving stream,  
For they have all been taught

Just what it means; and may they feel  
As though they once again  
Were being held up to receive  
The drops of holy rain;

So that the sight they crane to see  
May more be than a sight—  
A warning against doing wrong,  
A help to doing right.

## CONFIRMATION

You are too old, perhaps, my friends,  
To care for little rhymes,  
But there is just one thing that you  
May think upon sometimes.

That which was done to you was done  
To Christians in old days  
By the Apostles—just the same,  
For so the Scripture says.

For those who thus were treated by  
St. Peter and St. Paul  
Received exactly that Grace which  
Was given to you all.

He Who His Grace did then bestow  
Does with the same now bless;  
The Apostles then could do no more,  
The Bishop did no less.



## TO MY YOUNG FRIENDS

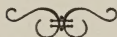
I've written you these little rhymes  
Thinking perhaps they may  
Amuse you, and may help you to  
Remember me some day.

Some day? Yes, when I've said good-bye  
To those whom now I see,  
This little book may help you all  
To think sometimes of me.

One born in eighteen-fifty-six  
Cannot expect for long  
To be with those to whom he now  
Inscribes his little song.

But, never mind, if but the torch  
Of love be handed on;  
I ask you for your kindly thoughts  
Of me when I am gone.

That's all, and that is quite enough,  
For kindly thoughts of one  
Who's gone are the best epitaph  
On him whose days are done.







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